

**PRESS RELEASE**

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***umati* linking the old and the new in “brownfield” Hackathon**  
**Machine tool community working on joint solutions aimed at connecting existing machines**

**Frankfurt am Main, 31 May 2023.** – What is the best way to connect old machines to new systems? This was the very question that spurred *umati*, the connectivity initiative of the mechanical and plant engineering industry, to organize a hackathon in cooperation with the international United Grinding Group. A total of 30 digitalization experts from 17 companies attended the networking event in Steffisburg, Switzerland. The main focus of the hackathon was on bringing together experts to enable the exchange of data between existing (so-called brownfield) machine and software systems.

Dr. Alexander Broos, Head of Research and Technology at the VDW (German Machine Tool Builders' Association), Frankfurt am Main, and *umati* project manager, is pleased about the effective continuation of the work: "We were able to build on the successful launch in 2022 and also welcomed many new participants on board. The hackathon has attracted three further partners to the *umati* community. This shows us that there is still plenty of work to do in bringing about the intelligent networking of machines. More and more experts are recognizing how we need to collaborate across corporate boundaries, and which opportunities *umati* can offer in achieving our common goal. "Software architect Timo Barth from Codewerk, a Karlsruhe based software service and provider participating in *umati*, agrees: "It was a useful event for us. It was very well organized, meaning that we were able to discover a great many

things related to *umati*. It also provided an excellent opportunity to exchange ideas and learn from each other and from the numerous experts."

The participants formed a total of five teams and were able to test the implementation of *OPC UA for Machine Tools* for connecting up older machines. They were supported by United Grinding Group, Grob-Werke GmbH & Co. KG from Mindelheim, and Wago GmbH & Co. KG from Minden which provided components for retrofitting. "I found it very interesting to discover more about *umati* and to understand what it actually involves. The challenge remains the same: bridging the gap between the customer and the machine, and making it as simple as possible to use the data," says participant Urs Stäheli, Director of Software Development at grinding machine manufacturer Kellenberger from St. Gallen, Switzerland.

In addition, one of the groups was able to pre-test use of the soon-to-be-available *OPC UA for Power Consumption Management Companion Specification* for machine tools, thereby gaining valuable insights that will be fed back into the standardization process. The same applies to the participants of the hackathon, as Bastian Schmick, connectivity expert at ifm electronic gmbh, Essen, confirms: "It was definitely worthwhile taking part. We were able to deepen our OPC UA expertise and gain a better understanding of the *umati* ecosystem. We now need to sit down and process all the different insights." Contributing to the further development of OPC UA specifications with practical experience from the field and also supporting rapid implementation – these are some of the core tasks of *umati*. Ten mechanical and plant engineering subsectors have already joined forces in *umati* with their own individual OPC UA Companion Specifications.

Both organizers and participants were more than satisfied with the outcome of the hackathon. "I was impressed by the level of cooperation between all the participants. It was a wonderful mix of hands-on participation, pooling of technical experience – and fun. The results from the individual working groups showed that *umati* allows even existing machines to provide standardized data. This was a textbook case of turning theory into practice," says Christian

Josi, Head of Digital Engineering & Digital Solutions at United Grinding, summing up the hackathon. *umati* is set to continue this series of events in order to drive forward the development work and to network the industry. The next event is planned to coincide with EMO Hannover in September 2023.

(Length: 4.290 characters including spaces)

*Author: Tobias Beckmann, VDW*

#### **umati: connecting the world of machinery**

umati (universal machine technology interface) is the global initiative for open communication interfaces for the machine building industry and its customers. Machine makers, software manufacturers, component suppliers and users have joined forces to create a strong community aimed at promoting the use of open, standardized interfaces based on OPC UA Companion Specifications. umati ensures identical implementation, provides a platform for sharing experiences, creates visibility in the market, and demonstrates the resulting value-added in a practical way, at <https://umati.app>.

umati enables the exchange of data between machines, components and systems, and their integration into customer and user-specific IT ecosystems - simply, seamlessly and securely.

umati is supported by VDW and VDMA and is based on OPC UA, a framework for communication among shop-floor devices. Standardized data models defined in OPC UA Companion Specifications can easily be extended to include customer or vendor-specific data. Around 25 Companion Specifications have already been published for various engineering technologies such as robotics, measuring systems, plastics and rubber machines, woodworking, machine tools, etc. 30 more are currently in the pipeline. In addition, the central "OPC UA for Machinery" Companion Specification contains basic building blocks – such as identification, job control and energy monitoring – that are crucial for the entire machinery and plant engineering industry.

Further information at: <https://umati.org>

Contact: [info@umati.org](mailto:info@umati.org)

#### **Images:**

Image 01: A total of 30 digitalization experts from 17 companies attended the networking event in Steffisburg, Switzerland. (Image: Thomas Kunz / United Grinding)

Image 02: Dr. Alexander Broos, Head of Research and Technology at the VDW (German Machine Tool Builders' Association), Frankfurt am Main, and

*umati* Project Manager: "There is still plenty of work to do in bringing about the intelligent networking of machines." (Image: Thomas Kunz / United Grinding)

Image 03: *umati* is set to continue this series of events in order to drive forward the development work and to network the industry. The next event is planned to coincide with EMO Hannover in September 2023. (Image: Thomas Kunz / United Grinding)

Graphics and photos can be found in the Press section at [www.vdw.de](http://www.vdw.de) or at [www.umati.org](http://www.umati.org) under News. The VDW and *umati* can also be followed on social media:



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